AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the above-referenced application:

1. (Currently amended) A system for converting first and second signals representative of payload and supervisory information, respectively, between an electrical format and a WDM aggregated optical format, the system ~~including~~ comprising:

at least one first converter for converting said first signal between said electrical format and a first, disaggregated optical format,

at least one second converter for converting said second signal between said electrical format and a second, disaggregated optical format, ~~and~~

at least one optical WDM converter ~~for converting~~ including a beam splitter that converts said first and second signals between said first and second disaggregated optical formats and said WDM aggregated optical format, wherein at least one of said at least one first converter, said at least one second converter and said at least one optical WDM converter are in a hermetic enclosure and wherein said at least one first converter, said at least one second converter and said at least one optical WDM converter are integrated to a single self-contained module by means of signal propagation paths that are exempt from splices ~~and wherein at least one of the first converter, the second converter and the optical WDM converter are mounted on a thermoelectric cooler~~ , wherein the beam splitter is aligned with an optical connector for conveying said first and said second signals in said WDM aggregated optical format, the system further comprising:

a first focusing element interposed between said beam splitter and said optical connector, and

an optical isolator interposed between said beam splitter and said first focusing element.

2. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said first converter and said second converter have associated signal processing electronics,

said signal processing electronics being integrated to said single self-contained module, said signal processing electronics generating said first and said second signals representative of said payload and said supervisory information, in said electrical format.

3.-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~3~~ 1, wherein said beam splitter ~~has associated an optical connector for conveying said first and said second signals in said WDM aggregated optical format, and wherein said beam splitter~~ is arranged to define an optical signal reflection path between said second converter and said optical connector.

6. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~3~~ 5, wherein ~~said beam splitter has associated~~ a second ~~radiation~~ focusing ~~elements~~ element is interposed between said beam splitter and said ~~first and said~~ second converter.

7.-8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said first converter and said second converter include laser sources driven with said first and said second signals in said electrical format, respectively, and wherein said optical WDM converter includes a WDM combiner to combine said first and said second signals in said first disaggregated optical format and said second disaggregated optical format to produce said WDM aggregated optical format, the system thus comprising a transmitter module.

10. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said optical WDM converter includes a WDM splitter for de-multiplexing said WDM aggregated optical format into said first disaggregated optical format and said second disaggregated optical format, and wherein said first converter and said second

converter include photoelectric converters for converting said first disaggregated optical format and said second disaggregated optical format into said first and second signals in said electrical format, the system thus comprising a receiver module.

11. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, further including:

a pair of said first converters in the form of a first laser source and a first photoelectric converter, respectively;

a pair of said second converters in the form of a second laser source and a second photoelectric converter, respectively; and

a pair of said optical WDM converters, in the form of a WDM combiner and a WDM splitter, respectively;

such that said first laser source and said second laser source are arranged for converting a first pair of first and second signals representative of payload and supervisory information, respectively, from said electrical format into a first pair of first disaggregated optical format and second disaggregated optical format signals and said WDM combiner is adapted to convert said first pair of first and second disaggregated optical format signals into a first WDM aggregated optical format signal, and wherein said WDM splitter is adapted to convert a second WDM aggregated optical format signal into a second pair of first and second disaggregated optical format signals, and said first photoelectric converter and said second photoelectric converter are adapted to convert said second pair of first and second disaggregated optical format signals into a second pair of first and second signals representative of payload and supervisory information in said electrical format, the system thus comprising a transceiver module.

12. (New) The system of claim 6, wherein a third focusing element is interposed between said beam splitter and said first converter.